

# FACT OR OPINION

*Students practice using facts and separating fact from opinion*

## **Zone In** **Free Write**

1. Students write as many words as possible in 1 minute.
2. Write on the board the target number of words for the group (10 times the number of students). Students don't have to worry about spelling—just quantity and speed.
3. Give the keyword MUGGER. Say GO; time 1 minute. STOP.
4. Students count their words. Add everyone's total to get the total for the group. Did the group make the goal? Ask for volunteers to read their lists.

## **Topic** **Fact or Opinion**

(Materials: **Fact Sheet on Crime** ♦♦♦)

## **Introduction**

What does it mean when someone says, "That's just your opinion," or "That's a fact"? What is the difference between fact and opinion?

**Explain:** Facts are information that is true or has been proven in some way, such as by research. Opinions are beliefs, or what someone thinks. A person may base his or her opinion on facts.

**Example:** "Young people shouldn't smoke." Fact or opinion? (*Answer: opinion*)  
"Smoking causes lung cancer." Fact or opinion? (*Answer: fact*)

**Ask:** When do you want to use facts? Answers:

- When you are trying to persuade someone, or convince someone, or argue for or against something. You can use facts to support your opinion.
- When you are trying to give just the basic information without your opinion.

## **Activity**

Distribute **Fact Sheet on Crime** ♦♦♦.

**Ask:** How do you know these are facts? *Answer: Because it shows that the information is based on research.*

**Explain:** We want to hear your opinion about violence and crime. Back up what you say with facts. Work in pairs and use the facts on the handout. You can talk about:

- gun control
- juvenile justice
- street and safety smarts
- jobs, justice, and crime
- community centers
- other

## Wrap Up

Ask students to present their opinion with the facts to back it up.  
Ask if students learned any facts. Did the facts affect their opinions?

What kind of reading and writing gives facts? (*Answer: non-fiction*)  
Is it fact or opinion that research papers need facts to support what they say? (*Answer: fact!*)



CLINIC 12 HANDOUT

# FACT SHEET ON CRIME

Here are the facts:

1. There is more crime in societies that place a high value on individual development at the expense of family or community.<sup>1</sup>
2. High crime rates are correlated with high unemployment rates.<sup>2</sup>
3. In 1992, guns were involved in 68% of all homicides in the United States.<sup>3</sup>
4. Every two hours, a child in the United States dies of a gunshot wound.<sup>4</sup>
5. Forty-five percent of all persons arrested in the United States in 1996 were under 25 years old. Seventy-nine percent of all persons arrested were males.<sup>5</sup>
6. Higher penalties for crimes have not decreased the crime rate.<sup>6</sup>
7. You can decrease your chance of being attacked on the street by 70% if you walk with another person and by 90% if you walk with two others.<sup>7</sup>
8. In burglaries of more than three million American households, the burglars entered through unlocked doors or windows or used a "hidden" key.<sup>8</sup>
9. The poorer the person is, the more likely he or she is to be a crime victim.<sup>9</sup>

1 Lyn Curtis, Ed., *American Violence and Public Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 211.

2 Ibid., 59.

3 Bruce S. Glassman, Ed., *The Macmillan Visual Almanac* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 374.

4 Ibid., 382.

5 *Uniform Crime Reports for the United States*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, 1996, p. 214.

6 *American Violence and Public Policy*, 45.

7 *Crime and Human Nature*, James Q. Wilson and Richard Herrnstein, 1985, p. 73.

8 *Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice: Data* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1983), 31.

9 John H. Wright, Ed., *The Universal Almanac* (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel, 1997), 287.